

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 NSC-05 AID-05 IO-13 DIWY-01

AGRE-00 EB-08 COME-00 SP-02 SS-15 HEW-04 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 /075 W

-----062802 170756Z /17

P 170727Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5768

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FROM CHARGE'

E.O. 11652: ,XA

TAGS: SPOP

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR POPULATION INFORMATION

REFS: (A) STATE 167895, (B) SEOUL 1242 (1976)

1. FOLLOWING RESPONSE KEYED TO QUESTIONS POSED PARAS ONE THRU FOUR, REF (A).

2. RE PARA ONE, REF (A). DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

ROKG ESTIMATE OF MID-1976 POPULATION IS 35,860,000. CRUDE BIRTH RATES: 1975 - 24.0; 1976 - 24.3. CRUDE DEATH RATES: 1975 - 7.0; 1976 - 6.6.

3. RE PARAS TWO AND THREE, REF (A): POPULATION PROGRAMS AND NON-POPULATION PROGRAMS AFFECTING POPULATION GROWTH: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF ROKG POPULATION PROGRAM SUBMITTED REF (B) CONTINUES TO BE VALID. PERTINENT UPDATE INVOLVES TWO IMPRESSIVE ROKG GAINS IN OVERALL POPULATION/FAMILY PROGRAM. FIRST IS THE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN NUMBER OF VOLUNTARY FEMALE

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STERILIZATIONS DURING CY 1977. IN 1976, A TOTAL OF 80,447 VOLUNTARY FEMALE STERILIZATION ACCEPTORS WERE REPORTED. AS OF THE END OF JUNE 1977, A TOTAL OF 122,298 FEMALE VOLUNTARY STERILIZATIONS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT. WHILE MALE STERILIZATIONS HAVE NOT INCREASED PROPORTIONATELY, IT IS PROJECTED THAT TOTAL VOLUNTARY STERILIZATIONS WILL FAR EXCEED THE ROKG CY 1977 TARGET

OF 200,000.

SINCE 1974, THE ROKG VOLUNTARY STERILIZATION PROGRAM HAS CONCENTRATED ON IMPROVING THE AVAILABILITY OF FEMALE STERILIZATION SERVICES. THE PROJECT IS NOW CREDITED BY MANY KOREAN OBSERVERS WITH (A) STIMULATING THE DEMAND FOR STERILIZATION SERVICES, AND (B) DEMONSTRATING THAT VOLUNTARY STERILIZATION IS A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE CONTRACEPTIVE METHOD. IN FORMULATING THE FOURTH FIVE-YEAR ECONOMIC PLAN (1977-81), ROKG PLANNERS BECAME AWARE THAT PREVAILING CONGRACEPTIVE CONTINUATION RATES WERE TOO LOW TO PERMIT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PREVIOUS TARGET OF A 1.30 PERCENT POPULATION GROWTH RATE BY 1981. MOREOVER, THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF REPRODUCTIVE-AGE COUPLES (RESULTING LARGELY FROM THE POST-KOREAN WAR BABY BOOM) WAS ANOTHER SERIOUS BARRIER TO ACHIEVING THE NATIONAL TARGET. ONE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PLANNING EXERCISE IN 1976 WAS TO PLACE MORE EMPHASIS ON VOLUNTARY STERILIZATIONS IN THE PROGRAM FOR 1977-81. ADDITIONALLY, THE GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY FOR FEMALE STERILIZATIONS WAS INCREASED FROM TEN DOLLARS IN 1976 TO THIRTY DOLLARS FOR 1977. THIS RATHER DRAMATIC INCREASE IS THOUGHT TO BE THE MAJOR REASON FOR THE SIGNIFICANT RISE IN POPULARITY OF THE FEMALE STERILIZATION PROCEDURE. THE SUBSIDY GOES TO THE INSTITUTION PROVIDING THE SERVICE. IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRIVATE PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS, THE SUBSIDY HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN THE INCENTIVE TO PROVIDE MORE SERVICE, HOWEVER, SINCE THE SUBSIDY PAID TO A GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL GOES INTO GENERAL REVENUES, NEITHER THE DEPARTMENT NOR PHYSICIAN CONCERNED RECEIVE ANY ADDITIONAL REMUNERATION. THIS UNDOUBTEDLY EXPLAINS WHY 94 PERCENT OF THE 42,218 FEMALE STERILIZATIONS FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1977 WERE DONE BY PRIVATE HOSPITALS (ACCORDING TO MHSA DATA).

FIELD VISITS INDICATE THAT THE DEMAND FOR FEMALE

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STERILIZATION IS VERY HIGH AT THE PRESENT TIME. THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF CASES MAY BE HIGHER THAN OFFICIAL REPORTS INDICATE BECAUSE ONLY GOVERNMENT-SUBSIDIZED CASES ARE INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM. USAID BELIEVES ROKG'S EFFORTS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT LAPORASCOPIY IS SAFE, CONVENIENT AND EFFECTIVE CONTRA-CEPTIVE ARE EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE FACTORS IN SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN RATE OF ACCEPTANCE THIS METHODOLOGY.

SECOND SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE FACTOR IN ROKG POPULATION/FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM SINCE REF (B) REPORT IS INCREASING NATIONAL BUDGET SUPPORT. CY 1977 APPROVED ALLOCATIONS AMOUNTED TO 5.13 BILLION WON (APPROXIMATELY 10.6 MILLION U.S. DOLLARS). TOTAL CY 1976 ALLOCATIONS AMOUNTED TO 1.85 BILLION WON.

4. RE PARA FOUR, REF (A): FOOD AND POPULATION: KOREA'S PROSPECTS FOR EXPANDED FOOD PRODUCTION BY 1985 ARE FAST REACHING A PLATEAU. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CONTINUES TO ENCROACH INTO LANDS THAT HAVE BEEN USED FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES. WHILE PRODUCTIVITY IS HIGH IN PADDY LANDS, VIRTUALLY ASSURING SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN RICE FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS, AS PER CAPITA INCOME CLIMBS, WE SEE A TENDENCY TOWARD DIVERSIFICATION OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TRADITIONAL RICE ORIENTED DIET TOWARD A DIET COMPRISED OF MORE WHEAT, VEGETABLES, AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS. IT IS CERTAIN THAT KOREA WILL BE ABLE TO PRODUCE ITS OWN VEGETABLES, BUT IT IS NOT PROBABLE THAT A SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION OF DOMESTIC WHEAT PRODUCTION CAN OCCUR. THE LAND IS ALREADY HEAVILY COMMITTED TO RICE. WE CAN EXPECT WHEAT IMPORTS TO REACH 2.5 TO 2.8 MILLION TONS BY 1985. COMPARED WITH 1.9 MILLION TONS IN 1977.

WHILE THERE MAY BE SOME POTENTIAL FOR EXPANDING

PRODUCTION OF SOYBEANS, THE COUNTRY WILL REMAIN DEPENDENT ON IMPORTED SOYBEANS FOR THEIR MAJOR EDIBLE OIL AND MEAL REQUIREMENTS. AS DIETS SHIFT TOWARD MORE ANIMAL PRODUCTS, IMPORTS OF CORN WILL RAPIDLY ACCELERATE FROM THE CURRENT LEVEL OF 1.3 MILLION TONS ANNUALLY TO AN EXPECTED 2.5 MILLION TONS. INFRASTRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS WILL FOLLOW IN AN ORDERLY MANNER. FINANCING ABILITY WILL BECOME LESS OF A PROBLEM. STORAGE FACILITIES ARE GOOD AND IMPROVING CONSTANTLY.

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